

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

Submitted by Patricia Morse, President, CEO and Administrator of Connecticut Baptist Homes, Inc.

February 23, 2022

Regarding the DSS Budget Adjustments

House Bill 5037, An Act Adjusting the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of the Governor's proposed budget adjustments related to the nursing home acuity-based rate system.

My name is Patricia Morse and I serve Connecticut Baptist Homes, Inc. as their President and CEO. My organization is a member of LeadingAge Connecticut and we serve approximately 120 older adults on our Meriden, CT campus each day, we are governed by a community board, and we employ over 125 staff members.

As you know, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on aging services and we have worked very hard to establish the policies, procedures and skills necessary to maintain the health and safety of our residents and clients safe while keeping them secure and comfortable. We have valued our partnership with the state as we have faced this pandemic, including the vital financial support the state has provided to our nursing home. This financial support is greatly appreciated and desperately needed as we face increasing costs across the board, but most especially for food, services and supplies. Our critical workforce shortages in all areas (Licensed Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, and entry level positions in dietary, laundry and housekeeping) continues to drive up salaries and wages.

LeadingAge Connecticut has also advocated on our behalf for additional funding to address the deficiencies and inequities that exist in the current nursing home rate system and which were caused by years of disregarding the statutory rate system. The inequities have disadvantaged many high-quality nursing homes, including our non-profit nursing home, which receives much less in our paid Medicaid rate than we are supposed to receive through the statutory rate formula.

It is important that we address these rate inequities and stabilize the rates for high-quality nursing homes, as we are a vital part of the health care continuum.

We were pleased to learn that administration has determined that this rate inequity should be addressed in the new acuity-based nursing home rate system. As a result, the Governor is proposing to invest additional Medicaid funding in order to rebase the nursing home rates. This rebasing will recognize allowable costs and increase the rates of nursing homes like ours that have continually invested in their physical plants, services and workforce. **The Governor has included \$12.8 million in the DSS budget to support the first year of the rebasing, which we strongly support and we urge you to support it as well.**

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and please feel free to reach out to me if I can answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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